

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in Title IV of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act of 2014; 34CFR 361.5(c)(55), 34CFR 361.48(a)(2),(3),(4);(b)(6),(18); 29USC 704(37), 709(c); 723(a)(5), 723(a)(15), 723(b)(7) and 733.

II. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) will ensure that access to training services is available to assist individuals with a disability to choose, prepare for, obtain and maintain employment that is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Career information, counseling, situational assessment, internships, career guidance, and other related resources will be made available as appropriate to the needs of the individual to facilitate informed choice

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Training is services needed to prepare an ORS eligible individual for employment. These services are agreed to by the individual and VR counselor through the process of informed choice. Training includes the following categories:
 - 1. Post-Secondary Training means education provided by a degree granting institution of higher education (universities, colleges, community, or junior colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes, hospital schools of nursing, or any other post-secondary education institution).
 - 2. Vocational Training means skill development in a specific vocation that will result in employment, such as truck driving, propane gas service wallpaper hanging, etc.
 - 3. On-the-Job Training (OJT) – is a method of learning skills on the job needed for a specific vocation with the instruction delivered by the employer at the worksite.
 - 4. Direct school costs means expenses of tuition, fees, books, room and board.

IV. GUIDELINES

A. Training Expenses

1. ORS uses the established in-state tuition rates of the University of Rhode Island as its baseline for tuition assistance.
2. If the individual chooses to attend a private in-state or an out-of-state institution when the coursework is available in state, ORS will fund up to the baseline amount based on unmet need.
3. If no comparable program exists at an in-state institution, ORS training grant amount will be based upon the amount of unmet need on the Student Aid Report (SAR) up to the URI baseline for tuition assistance.
4. Individuals are expected to attend on a full-time basis in order to take full advantage of the available comparable benefits and ORS resources. A waiver, based on disability and/or family-related circumstances, may be requested as noted below.
5. ORS may pay up to \$1,000* for all required books, materials and tools identified on the course syllabus. Additional tools and equipment will be considered on an individualized basis with comparable benefits being considered.
6. Continued educational support is conditional based on acceptable academic progress: copies of grades, course completion, and documented progress towards majors.
7. The URI tuition baseline will be applicable to SSI/SSDI beneficiaries for out-of-state and private tuition rates if the coursework is available in-state.
8. Comparable Benefits are provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by Federal, State or local public agencies. Such resources as Pell Grants, SAR identified family contributions, work study or accepted loans are considered part of a student's financial aid package. The student is not required or obligated to accept a loan to reach an unmet need for school or training. Merit scholarship awards are exempt from classification as a comparable benefit.

B. Waiver

The written waiver request should be submitted to the Administrator of Vocational Rehabilitation or designee, who may grant a waiver based on individualized extenuating circumstances.